IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier version and listings.

1. (canceled).

2. (currently amended): An image processing method for generating a panoramic image by compositing first and second images, comprising the steps of:

acquiring the first and second images, and a reference image which has overlapping portions with both of the first and second images;

calculating a first conversion condition required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the first image to a hue or brightness level of the reference image;

calculating a second conversion condition required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the second image to the hue or brightness level of the reference image;

converting the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition;

converting the second image on the basis of the second conversion condition; and

generating the panoramic image by compositing the converted first image and the converted second image without the reference image~~an image obtained by converting the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition, and an image obtained by converting the second image on the basis of the second conversion condition~~.

3. (original): The method according to claim 2, wherein the reference image, and the first and second images are images sensed at the same time.

4. - 6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended): A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer program that makes a computer execute an image processing method for generating a panoramic image by compositing first and second images, said computer program comprising:

~~a program~~ code of a step of acquiring the first and second images, and a reference image which has overlapping portions with both of the first and second images;

~~a program~~ code of a step of calculating a first conversion condition required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the first image to a hue or brightness level of the reference image;

~~a program~~ code of a step of calculating a second conversion condition required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the second image to the hue or brightness level of the reference image;

code of a step of converting the first image on the basis of the first conversion of condition;

code of a step of converting the second image on the basis of the second conversion condition; and

~~a program~~ code of a step of generating the panoramic image by compositing the converted first image and the converted second image without the reference image ~~an~~

~~image obtained by converting the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition, and an image obtained by converting the second image on the basis of the second conversion condition.~~

8.   (currently amended): An image processing apparatus for generating a panoramic image by compositing first and second images, comprising:

an acquiring unit adapted to acquire the first and second images, and a reference image which has overlapping portions with both of the first and second images;

a first calculating unit adapted to calculate a first conversion condition required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the first image to a hue or brightness level of the reference image;

a second calculating unit adapted to calculate a second conversion condition required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the second image to the hue or brightness level of the reference image;

<u>a first converting unit adapted to convert the first image on the basis of the first conversion;</u>

<u>a second converting unit adapted to convert the second image on the basis of the second conversion condition;</u> and

a generating unit adapted to generate the panoramic image by compositing <u>the converted first image and the converted second image without the reference image</u>~~an image obtained by converting the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition, and an image obtained by converting the second image on the basis of the second conversion condition.~~

9.   (canceled).

10.   (currently amended): <u>An image processing method for generating a full-view panoramic image by compositing a plurality of images each of which has overlapping portions with neighboring images, comprising the steps of:</u>

<u>acquiring, when an arbitrary one of the plurality of images is defined as a first image, and images to be composited as right and left neighboring images of the first image are defined as second and third images, a first reference image having overlapping portions with both the first and second images, and a second reference image having overlapping portions with both the first and third images;</u>

<u>calculating first and second conversion conditions required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the first image to hue or brightness levels of the first and second reference images;</u>

<u>generating a converted image by converting a left predetermined region of the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition and converting a right predetermined region of the first image on the bases of the second conversion condition, and</u>

<u>generating a full-view panoramic image by compositing the converted images generated for all of the plurality of images,</u> ~~The method according to claim 9,~~

wherein the conversions based on the first and second conversion conditions are weighted depending on distances from right and left ends of the first image.

11.   (original): The method according to claim 10, wherein the first and second reference images are generated from one image.

12.   (currently amended): A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer program that makes a computer execute an image processing method for generating a full-view panoramic image by compositing a plurality of images each of which has overlapping portions with neighboring images, said computer program comprising:

a ~~program~~ code of a step of acquiring, when an arbitrary one of the plurality of images is defined as a first image, and images to be composited as right and left neighboring images of the first image are defined as second and third images, a first reference image having overlapping portions with both the first and second images, and a second reference image having overlapping portions with both the first and third images;

a ~~program~~ code of a step of calculating first and second conversion conditions required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the first image to hue or brightness levels of the first and second reference images;

a ~~program~~ code of a step of generating a converted image by converting a left predetermined region of the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition and converting a right predetermined region of the first image on the basis of the second conversion condition; and

a ~~program~~ code of a step of generating a full-view panoramic image by compositing the converted images generated for all of the plurality of images.

wherein the conversions on the basis of the first and second conversion conditions are weighted depending on distances from right and left ends of the first image.

13.   (currently amended): An image processing apparatus for generating a full-view panoramic image by compositing a plurality of images each of which has overlapping portions with neighboring images, comprising:

an acquiring unit adapted to, when an arbitrary one of the plurality of images is defined as a first image, and images to be composited as right and left neighboring images of the first image are defined as second and third images, acquire a first reference image having overlapping portions with both the first and second images, and a second reference image having overlapping portions with both the first and third images;

a calculating unit adapted to calculate first and second conversion conditions required to adjust a hue or brightness level of the first image to hue or brightness levels of the first and second reference images;

a first generating unit adapted to generate a converted image by converting a left predetermined region of the first image on the basis of the first conversion condition and converting a right predetermined region of the first image on the basis of the second conversion condition; and

a second generating unit adapted to generate a full-view panoramic image by compositing the converted images generated for all of the plurality of images,

wherein, in said first generating unit, the conversions on the basis of the first and second conversion conditions are weighted depending on distances from the right and left ends of the first image.